



# DESE

Missouri  
DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY  
EDUCATION

## FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES

February 9, 2024

### Let's Talk Tuesday - Upcoming Webinars

Join us for  
**TWO** upcoming  
Let's Talk Tuesday  
webinars!

**Tuesday  
February 13th**

An email will be sent out the morning prior to each LEAs Authorized Representative and Food Service Director on file. The email will include the link required to access the webinar.

The webinar will be recorded and posted at a later date for those that are not able to attend the live release. We look forward to hosting these trainings for all of you.



SAVE THE DATE!!

**LET'S TALK TUESDAY**

February 13, 2024

There will be 2 different webinars on this date.  
Please see below for details. Webinar links will be sent out on 2/12 and each session will have its own link.

**Commodities 101: 1-2pm CST**

- This class will provide step by step guidance and helpful tips on completing the 24/25 USDA Foods Packet

**POS / Menu Documentation: 2-3pm CST**

- This class will provide guidance on CN Labels, Product Info Sheets, Point of Service, Food Buying Guide and More

The **January 16th Let's Talk Tuesday recording – DESE-FNS Webinar: USDA Foods Packet, Required SNP forms, and Afterschool Snack Program** is now available on the **Trainings page** of the DESE-FNS website.

### Farm to School Information and Grant Opportunities

#### Bringing the Farm to School: Local Producer, School, and ECE Introduction Registration

**Date:** Wednesday, February 21, 2024  
**Time:** 8:00 am - 3:00 pm  
**Location:** Drury Plaza Hotel Cape Girardeau Conference Center  
3351 Percy Drive  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

A no cost, working lunch highlighting local ingredients will be served

School nutrition professionals that attend this training will:


- Hear from other schools that have successfully incorporated local products.
- Gain knowledge and resources for local purchasing.
- Network with producers interested in selling to school and ECE markets.

For more information contact: Barbara Shaw, Coordinator - DESE Food and Nutrition Services / [Barbara.Shaw@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Barbara.Shaw@dese.mo.gov) or 573-751-8673

*You can find additional information, resources and the **application** on the **Promoting Specialty Crops in Missouri DESE, FNS webpage**.*



**Promoting Specialty Crops in Missouri Schools & ECEs Grant Program**



The Missouri Grown program is providing up to \$1,000 reimbursement to Missouri schools & early childcare education centers to cover the purchase of specialty crops. Schools/ECEs must purchase specialty crops from a Missouri farmer and complete an educational activity about specialty crop production with students.

**Specialty crops must be purchased from a Missouri farmer between April 1, 2022 and September 28, 2024.**



Scan here for more information or visit [agriculture.mo.gov/abd/financial](http://agriculture.mo.gov/abd/financial).

### Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Mid-Year Election Opportunity

#### **Deadline to Implement Mid-Year is March 31, 2024**

This New final rule was effective 10/26/2023 [review powerpoint slides here](#).

The new rule lowers the minimum identified student percentage (ISP) from 40 percent to 25 percent.

Here is a list of **Eligible and Near Eligible LEA's** (schools with an ISP of 25%-39%). These schools would be newly eligible under the new final rule.

This creates a greater flexibility to offer no-cost meals to all enrolled students if financially viable to the school district.

**Schools should make these following considerations:**

- CEP does remove administrative burdens such as distributing and approving free or reduced-price applications, verifying applications, collecting lunch money from students and counting meals by eligibility
- If the ISP does not yield 100 percent free claiming percentage then it is very essential to ensure financial viability to cover the difference in meals not able to be claimed at the free rate
- FRL percentages used for formula calculation
- LEAs should use the **CEP calculator** tool to determine the financial impact

**Contact Food and Nutrition Services by phone or email:**

**Brittany Otto:** 573-751-7664

**Main Phone:** 573-751-8673

**Email:** [Brittany.Otto@dese.mo.gov](mailto:Brittany.Otto@dese.mo.gov)

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and [foodandnutritionservices@dese.mo.gov](mailto:foodandnutritionservices@dese.mo.gov)

## Reminders and Important Information

### Verification Report

Please note that the Verification Report was due to be complete as of December 15. **If you have not yet completed this report, the report is now past due.** Please complete the report immediately. If you have not yet completed the Verification process, please do so immediately. For guidance on the verification Report, please review the **Verification Report Guidance**.

As a reminder the verification process is due to be completed by November 15 annually. If a family was notified of their selection for verification and has failed to provide documentation by the due date provided, they must be changed to full pay and notified of the change. This will complete the verification process. For a refresher on the verification process please view our **Verification Step-by-Step Summary**.

This report is required for all LEAs participating in the National School Lunch Program. **As of February 1, we have began putting schools who have not completed their report on a payment hold until the report is complete.** If you require further assistance, please reach out to your regional Nutrition Program Specialist. To identify your Specialist, please use the **Map** and **Contact Information**.

### Supply Chain Assistance Payments

Round 4 payments have been processed for LEA's without a Food Service Management Company (FSMC). FSMC schools must complete an attestation which will be **available soon**. You can check for updates and also check the amount of SCA funds for your LEA by using the **Supply Chain Assistance LEA Lookup Tool** under the Supply Chain Assistance section on the **News and Updates page**.

## Important School Nutrition Information and Resources

### Food Buying Guide Updates

Two exciting new features have been added to the **Food Buying Guide** for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG) Interactive Web-based Tool. Both features are available under the Tools menu on the toolbar:

- **Interactive flow chart on using the preparation yield** walks users through when to use the Preparation Yield factor in the Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW).
- **An Ounces to Pounds Calculator** allows users to easily convert ounces to pounds and pounds to ounces to make converting units a breeze!

- **New foods are available in the FBG!** New additions consist of USDA Foods frozen mixed vegetables and a variety of meat items including 11-, 43-, and 48-ounce pouched tuna; boneless, skinless chicken thighs; ground mutton, mutton shoulder chops and stew meat; catfish fillets; and USDA Foods canned pork. Stay tuned for additional yield data releases

This information is also on our DESE, FNS [Meal Pattern Documentation page](#).

### **MO Healthy Schools**

Visit the [new website](#) and sign up for the Missouri Healthy Schools newsletter!

### **Legislative Action Conference (LAC)**

Be part of advocacy in action when you attend [SNA's Legislative Action Conference](#) in the nation's capital March 3-5, 2024.

### **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**

This notice announces the annual adjustments to the [reimbursement rates](#) for meals served in the **Summer Food Service Program for Children for calendar year 2024**. These adjustments address changes in the Consumer Price Index, as required under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

### **Team Nutrition Recipes**

Check out the [Team Nutrition Recipe of the Month Newsletter](#) to find some soup recipes to help keep you warm this winter! You can also scan the QR code for Child and Adult Care Food Program Cooking Videos, or check out the Institute of Child Nutrition's [Child Nutrition Recipe Box](#) for more recipes!



### **Missouri Healthy Schools Conference**

The 31st Annual Missouri Coordinated School Health Conference will be held February 21-23, 2024 in Lake Ozark, MO. DESE, FNS Coordinator, Barbara Shaw and Nutrition Program Analyst, Ginger Thompson will be presenting on School Nutrition Strategies to Address Food Insecurities. For additional information or to register to attend this conference visit <https://healthykidsmo.com/>.

## **USDA Foods Update**

### **Urgent Message - 24/25 USDA Foods Packet - REVISED**

Our USDA Foods Team received an update on February 7th from USDA with an increase in the "estimated effective meal rate" for the 24/25 school year. The original meal rate was \$.30 and the new meal rate has been increased to \$.45. With our carry over entitlement in addition, this will make Missouri's new effective meal rate \$.56.

This will provide additional commodity funds for our Missouri Districts. As a result, we have issued a revised USDA Foods Packet that will reflect the increased meal rate and your new entitlement spending total. We apologize for the additional work this may create for districts that have already submitted their USDA Foods Packets to us; however, this revision is important to ensure that each district receives their full entitlement value. **We ask that all Missouri districts complete this Revised USDA Foods Packet and submit it to us by March 1st at [donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov](mailto:donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov).** We will provide a confirmation

email within 5 business day of receipt. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please contact us at [donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov](mailto:donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov) and verify we received it.

For districts that already submitted a packet with the lower meal rate, we will discard your original packet when we receive your revised packet.

### **Gold Star Live Inventory**

As a friendly reminder, all Direct Delivery (Brown Box) and Fee For Service foods that have been processed for the 23/24 school year, must be received during the 23/24 school year. April is our last scheduled warehouse delivery month, so product remaining in your Gold Star account will automatically be shipped to you in April if you do not place it on your Gold Star order. Please plan your February, March, and April deliveries to assure you will be able to accept all items you have processed.

### **Advertising Direct Delivery Foods**

DESE will continue to offer bonus foods through the month of April for district to select for delivery.

School districts that have Direct Delivery (Brown Box) items that they would like to advertise to others as bonus may do so through the month of March. **We will discontinue school districts' "bonus advertisements" in April as all districts will be responsible for accepting foods that remain in their accounts at that time.**

### **Let's Talk Tuesday – Commodity 101, February 13th 1 – 2pm**

We are offering a webinar version of our Commodity 101 class featured during our Commodity Expos. This session will provide step by step guidance and helpful tips on completing the 24/25 USDA Foods Packet. This session is great for new directors as well as anyone that would like to learn more about the USDA Foods Packet and tools available to assist with managing it. There is also our 23/24 Commodity 101 session posted on our USDA Foods webpage <https://vimeo.com/799989736/c86cb38969>

### **Net Off Invoice Pounds**

We are now into February and districts that have processed Net Off Invoice should have utilized more than 65% of pounds processed. Districts that have not reached this level of use will be receiving an inquiry from your processors asking if you have a plan to utilize your remaining pounds before the end of the school year.

Districts with a plan may keep their pounds and continue to draw them down. Districts that do not respond to the processors or that do not have a plan may have their pounds swept into the state account to take them to the 65% usage level.

### **24/25 Entitlement**

**NOI Bonus** – Bonus entitlement is still available. Please reach out to each processor for specific information on pounds available.

**DOD Bonus** - Bonus entitlement is still available. Please contact us at [donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov](mailto:donatedfoods@dese.mo.gov) to request additional dollars.

**Direct Delivery (Brown Box) Bonus** - Advertisements have just been posted on your Gold Star webpage. There are over 40 different products currently available as Bonus and more will be added throughout the month of February. Please check the website often and request only the amount you can immediately receive and store. Bonus items must be added to your next scheduled Gold Star delivery.

To request bonus items, log in on the [Gold Star website](#). On the left panel, click on Advertisements under the USDA Direct Delivery Header. Then request the items you would like. Districts that have direct delivery items they will not be able to utilize may use this feature to "advertise" the items to other districts. Any items advertised and not requested within 2 months, must be placed on delivery and accepted by the district advertising the item. More information and instructions on this advertisement feature can

## Past Newsletters

Missed a past  
newsletter or need  
to access them  
again? You can find  
them all on our  
**Food and Nutrition  
Services  
Newsletter page!**



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